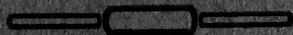


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COMMERCIAL RABBIT FARMING AND THE FOOD SUPPLY



Complete Breeder's Guide

Stahl, E. W. (Ed.)



PUBLISHED BY

Outdoor Enterprise
Publishing Company

Kansas City

Missouri

MAR 15 1919

*A book for the education
of Economists—*

*A book of downright ad-
vice to householders—*

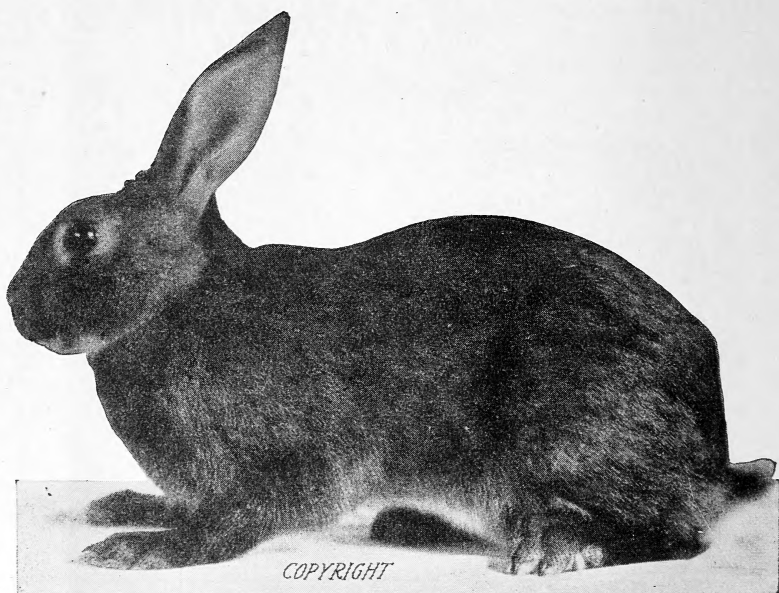
*A business prospectus for
Americans*

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PRICE, 50 CENTS



MARCH, 1918



BELGIAN HARE



CONTENTS

	Page
Introduction.	6
What Is a Commercial Rabbit?.....	7
History and Origin.....	14
The Abortive Boom.....	18
The Commercial Rabbit for Meat.....	23
How It Solves the Food Problem.....	29
Pertinent Statistics.	32
Nutritive Value of Meat.....	32
The Commercial Rabbit Business.....	34
How to Begin.....	35
Houses and Hutches.....	38
Feeding.	43
Breeding and Selecting.....	45
Care of the Young.....	47
The Utility.	50
Diseases.	51
Big Successes.	55
The Future.	55
Prolificacy.	56
Rabbits and War.....	58
Heredity.	61
Useful Rabbit Notes.....	62

LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

Belgian Hare Buck.....	46
Belgian Hare Doe.....	8
Flemish Giant Doe.....	10
Litter of Flemish Giants.....	15
Black Flemish Giant Buck.....	19
Young New Zealand Doe.....	37
Steel Gray Flemish Giant Buck.....	30
Housing and Hutches.....	39, 40, 41, 42
A Bunch of Fine Steel Gray Flemish Giants.....	48
White Giant Doe.....	57
A Mastedonian Buck.....	44
New Zealand Buck.....	24
American Checkered Giant Doe.....	36

INTRODUCTION

“COMMERCIAL RABBIT FARMING” was gotten out with the meat end of the industry in view.

The three breeds of hares best adapted for commercial purposes are the Belgian Hare Rabbit, the Flemish Giant Rabbit, and the New Zealand Rabbit.

The illustrations in this edition are of stock that were raised for size and hardiness more than for the fancy points. The exhibition type of hare finds little space in this book, as you must realize that hares must be raised to be used for meat. In this way this industry will in time be one of the largest and will take its place with the other great outdoor industries.

The contents of “COMMERCIAL RABBIT FARMING” may not meet with the approval of the fanciers who raise hares for a hobby and the sport of winning at the shows; however, as this book is boosting rabbits for meat, and is written from actual experience, we leave the fancy end of the industry to those who are more experienced in that type of stock.

THE AUTHOR.

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CHAPTER I

WHAT IS A COMMERCIAL RABBIT?

There are three kinds of rabbits—Commercial Rabbits, Game Rabbits and Pet Rabbits. Commercial rabbits are of several types, chief amongst which are, the Rufus Red Belgian Hare, the New Zealand Rabbit, the Flemish Giant Rabbit. We will consider these different types in the ensuing paragraphs.

GAME RABBITS

Game rabbits are wild rabbits. The common wild rabbit, the jack rabbit and the hare come under this heading. It is well-nigh impossible to raise any of these types in captivity, as they seem to pine away and die. Even if it were possible to domesticate them, it would not be practicable to raise them for commercial purposes, as in most states there are game laws which prohibit the sale of game stock during certain months or seasons. Thus, it is well to bear in mind that commercial rabbits are not game rabbits and are not, therefore, subject to the game laws. Passing over this question of whether it would be practicable to attempt to domesticate wild rabbits, the fact remains that wild rabbits are so small that it is not worth while.

PET RABBITS

Pet rabbits may be classed roughly as those of fancy colors, such as the Dutch Rabbit, the Angora Rabbit, the Himalayan Rabbit, the Polish Giant Rabbit, etc. In this class also may be included the numerous types of vari-colored stock raised by boys everywhere. The smaller types of pet rabbits are not worth raising for food because of their insignificant weight, but the main argument against all of them, from a commercial point of view, is that their color somehow makes people reluctant to kill and eat them. It is said by many breeders that a white rabbit is just as good to eat as a commercial or game rabbit, while others claim that the meat of the pet rabbit is too sweet to be palatable. On this point I venture no opinion. I would not like to eat a white rabbit myself. Certain it is that very few women will prepare a pet rabbit for the table. The very idea seems to be revolting to them.



BELGIAN HARE DOE

COMMERCIAL RABBITS

As before explained, commercial rabbits are of several types—mostly long-framed and heavy. The smallest type of pet rabbit will eat as much as a giant commercial rabbit, so it is well to bear in mind that, from a business standpoint, it is folly to raise anything but commercial rabbits for food.

THE RUFUS RED BELGIAN HARE

The Belgian Hare is perhaps the most popular of all commercial rabbits. It is said to be the hardiest and most prolific. Belgian Hares are of two kinds—the common Gray Belgian and the Rufus Red. Both yield a fine-grained white venison that is highly nutritious and very palatable. No breeder disputes the fact that Belgian Hare venison is far superior to any other meat for food. It is tender, juicy and nutritious and may be cooked in a hundred different ways. It yields a higher percentage of net nutriment than chicken, beef, mutton or pork and is recommended by doctors as the ideal food for invalids. At maturity the Rufus Red Belgian weighs from seven to nine pounds, depending upon the method of breeding. When Rufus Red Belgians are bred for fancy or show purposes, weight is subordinate to shape and color, and the show standard calls for a weight of eight pounds. Utility Rufus Reds, however, may weigh all the way up to eleven pounds at maturity. It may not be amiss to insist here that an eleven-pound rabbit is quite a rabbit, especially when you consider that the wild rabbit dresses to only about two pounds or less. The Rufus Red Belgian Hare is very prolific. Four to six litters a year may be bred from this type, and anywhere from six to twelve young may be expected in each litter. It is commonly reported that a Rufus Red Belgian Hare will have from five to thirteen young in each litter, but it rarely happens that she will have less than six, and rarely that she will have more than eleven.

THE FLEMISH GIANT RABBITS

The Flemish Giant Rabbit is nearly twice as big as the Rufus Red, and quite as prolific. Litters of eight to eleven frequently occur. The Flemish Giant matures much more slowly than the Belgian Hare, reaching maturity at from twelve to fourteen months old. The weights of Flemish Giants run from ten to twenty pounds at maturity, although



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STEEL GRAY FLEMISH GIANT DOE

a twenty-pound Giant is rare. The average at maturity is about twelve to fourteen pounds. The meat of the Flemish is just as tender and delicious as that of the Belgian, and the skins are often made up into imitation furs. Because of its great weight, the Flemish is likely to become more and more popular as time goes on. For some unaccountable reason, the Steel Gray Flemish is more in demand than any other color, and yet it is hardly possible to breed a straight steel gray animal. Two steel gray parents may produce offspring in which several different shades appear, light and dark steel grays, and black.

THE NEW ZEALAND RED RABBIT

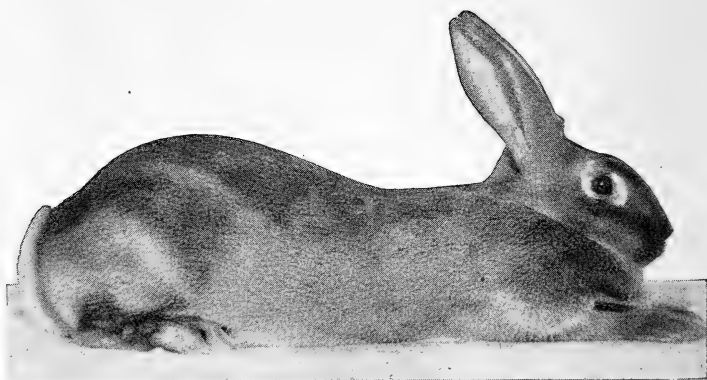
The New Zealand Red Rabbit is heavier than the Belgian Hare, but not quite so heavy as the Flemish. It is a comparatively recent breed and is claimed to be very hardy, and as prolific as either the Flemish or Belgian. If well cared for, it produces a heavy carcass on very little feed. It is said to eat less than either Flemish or Belgian. Its meat is just as delicious and nutritious as that of the Belgian and the Flemish.

COLOR

The color of the Rufus Red Belgian Hare is a rich, ruddy Rufus red—a brownish, golden red. The best specimens have four red feet and a creamy belly. The Belgian breeds true to color.

THE FLEMISH GIANT does not breed true to color. It generally comes in three shades—light gray, dark gray and jet black. Parents of one color nearly always produce offspring of several colors. The light gray types nearly always become slightly heavier than the others. It would seem that weight has been sacrificed in a great many instances in order to breed a truer steel gray. This is due to the influence of the fanciers. If the utility of Commercial Rabbits is to be fully developed, an effort must be made to restrict the fanciers to their own field and prevent them from foisting their fancies on the Commercial side of the rabbit industry. The fanciers raise rabbits only to kill time, while the utility men are exerting every effort to increase the food value of the stock.

THE NEW ZEALAND RED RABBIT breeds true to color. The perfect specimens are of an orange-red color,



FINE SPECIMEN NEW ZEALAND DOE

more lustrous than yellow, and yet not so gaudy as red. The New Zealand combines beauty with usefulness, and it has made great progress on the Pacific Coast, where it is raised for food in immense numbers.

FANCY FIRMLY ESTABLISHED

The question of color is bound up with the aims of the fanciers, to whom it is all-important. It is certain that commercial rabbits which come up to the standards of weight, shape and color set down by the various clubs, or by the parent body of all rabbit clubs—the National Breeders and Fanciers' Association—bring prices which are very tempting to the beginner, even if misleading. Thus, while the New Zealand Red Rabbit was produced by skillful breeders for the purpose of supplying the maximum amount of meat for the minimum feed cost, it is a fact beyond dispute that the fanciers have almost wholly captured the field, and by means of high prices offered for well-shaped and well-colored animals, forced the great majority of beginners into the "fancy" side of the industry. The same is true of the Belgian and Flemish. A heavy Steel Gray Flemish Giant at maturity, if it conforms to the standard promulgated by the fanciers, will bring anywhere from twenty-five to one hundred dollars, while if it were sold for meat, it would not bring more than three or four dollars. Again, a Rufus Red Belgian Hare that conforms to the fancy standard for weight, shape and color, will bring from eight to twenty dollars, while if it were sold for meat, it would not bring more than two or three dollars.

The best method, therefore, is to breed for weight, and yet select and mate those specimens which will be likely to produce the best colors. Thus, a fair percentage of fancy stock can be raised by a commercial breeder and sold at high prices. The fancy animals should pay the entire expenses of the plant, leaving the returns on the utility stock clear profit. This, in fact, is the method of the world's biggest breeder of New Zealand Reds.

A healthy and enthusiastic interest in the "fancy" is bound to produce a keen spirit of co-operation and steady progress in the industry.

In Flemish, weight is everything, and so the utility man has a good chance to convert his best stock into big money at any time.

CHAPTER II

HISTORY AND ORIGIN

The origin of commercial rabbits is shrouded in mystery—chiefly because the breeders of intermediate types were peasants of Central, Northern and Western Europe, who were unable to record their work. Even today, most breeders of commercial rabbits are men of no education, who, when they do write to the trade magazines, flounder in a morass of silly personalities, petty vanity and pointless gossip—and when you finish reading their memorabilia, you experience a dizzy sensation, as though, in a dream, you had been listening to the address of a cock magpie relating his adventure while gathering petty silverware and shining trinkets to deposit amongst the eggs in his lady's nest.

The history of the Rufus Red Belgian Hare is more readily available than that of other types of commercial rabbits. The Rufus Red was perfected by English breeders during a period of nearly one hundred years, and most of the books printed on the subject that give any real information are published in England. It would probably be necessary to obtain a copy of some prominent English journal devoted to commercial rabbits in order to obtain the names of publishers or sellers of these invaluable books. Very few are published in America that really satisfies the beginner's craving for real information. It does not follow that such information is not to be had in America, but it would require the work of a trained journalist to interview the successful fanciers and utility men of this country and to study the current pet stock and commercial rabbit magazines in order to gather that information into one volume that would present the subject in readable and comprehensible form.

The main weakness in most books published and sold by prominent breeders and fanciers is that they present the subject from the "fancy" angle only.

As a matter of fact, the average beginner is not entering the industry for glory, but for profits. He does not care two whoops in Hades for the niceties of color, shape and ticking, fine bones, carriage and grooming—what he is out after is MEAT—and MONEY. The meat and money is in commercial rabbits.

The standard for Rufus Red Belgian Hares is eight pounds at maturity. A Belgian that weighs over that is very



A LITTER OF YOUNG FLEMISH GIANTS
55 Pounds at 6 Months Old

likely to be disqualified in the show room. This proves the fallacy of the present Association methods. If the commercial rabbit—and especially the Belgian Hare—is to have any firm foundation as a meat animal, the standard must not put a damper on the aims of the utility. Suppose, for instance, that hogs were disqualified at county fairs because of weight and preference given to lean, shapely animals. Manifestly, this would make of live stock raising a profession for the idle rich—a mere time-killing enterprise that would stifle the ambition of farmers. The same principle holds good in commercial rabbits.

The ambition of fanciers to breed fine-boned animals is good—we don't want bones in our meat animals—we want flesh.

The foregoing paragraphs may seem to be a digression, but the questions discussed are intimately bound up with the history and origin of Belgian Hares. The English fanciers, being for the most part hobby-riders, have consistently striven to produce an animal of racy appearance, fine bones and graceful carriage. The breeders have not made any great amount of money in their little enterprises, because they have pursued the silly fetich of beauty, rather than the sound ambition of usefulness. Most of the English fanciers are slaving at arduous tasks to make a living and spending their real genius in producing an animal that is good for nothing else but show purposes, whereas, if they had been actuated by the right idea, they could have built up an industry that would have given them riches without heavy labor. The laughable part of it is that, while the English breeders are bending their energies in the direction of the "fancy," they are eating heavy rabbits that are produced in Flanders and shipped across the channel to the meat shops of London. Thus, while the English breeders have been decorating their parlor walls with blue ribbons, the Flemish breeders across the channel have been massing bank accounts.

Off-hand, one would harbor the impression that the Flemish breeders of Belgium, Holland and adjacent parts, had taken the results of the labors of the English breeders and turned them into cash, but such is not the case. The breed-

ers of the Netherlands gave to England the original types out of which were produced the Rufus Red Belgian Hare, and while the English were muddling away with shapely animals, the continental breeders had continued their work and produced a better meat animal. When I write of the "Flemish" breeders, I do not mean the breeders of the Flemish Giants, but the breeders of all types of commercial rabbits in Flanders.

There is an old book published a good many years ago by a prominent poultry journal publishing company and still sold in considerable volume that contains about all that was known about commercial rabbits up to ten years ago in this country, but it is rather out of date now. Most of the books sold by different one-horse breeders are clumsy rehashes of this book, masquerading as original research. The book is called "The Belgian Hare Guide."

It will be noticed that the Belgian Hare is described as that branch of the commercial rabbit family which was selected for fancy, and the Flemish Giant that which was selected for meat or utility. This is no longer true. The Flemish Giant itself has fallen under restrictive influence of the fanciers in late years, and weight has been sacrificed in the attempt to breed a pure steel gray strain.

The foregoing material on history and origin has been quoted because of its first-hand information.

It may be added that, as in the poultry industry, a good many breeders have experimented on their own account during recent years, and have produced various types of Commercial Rabbits, which they have given distinctive names. Thus, we see offered now and again the "Belgian"—a cross between Flemish and Belgian; the Belgian Giant, which is nothing but a heavy type of Utility Belgian.

The New Zealand Red Rabbit is said to be a cross between the Russian White Giant and the Rufus Red Belgian Hare, but persistent line breeding is necessary to breed out the white bars or stripes which occurred in the original specimens.

CHAPTER III

THE ABORTIVE BOOM

When the Commercial Rabbit Business is mentioned nowadays in the presence of older people, they often pooh-poo the idea of the Belgian Hare or other rabbits becoming a real industry. Of course, their scorn is at once swept away by the fact. The Belgian Hare, Flemish Giant and New Zealand Red Rabbit is now used for food in immense volume all over the country, and nearly all breeders eat their surplus bucks.

However, the reason for the old folks' skepticism is that, about twenty years ago, just after the introduction of the Belgian Hare into this country, a great boom occurred, during which a good many breeders made big fortunes. This boom gradually subsided, although thousands of enthusiastic breeders kept right on producing fancy animals and selling them at fancy prices.

But the main reason for the failure of the old boom, in my mind, was that advertising was not an exact science in those days, and so the independent breeders had no means of keeping the public interest alive.

Today, there are columns and columns of classified ads in the newspapers and magazines devoted to the interesting selling plans of producers and assemblers of Commercial Rabbits, and the public, upon answering these ads, is bombarded with a drum fire of attractive printed matter, presenting the subject to them in all its fascinating ways. Needless to say, a good many present-day breeders and assemblers are amassing big fortunes by selling Commercial Rabbits by mail, while thousands of others are earning comfortable incomes or adding materially to their regular incomes.

In order to illustrate the progress made in building up a permanent Commercial Rabbit Industry, perhaps no better method could be shown than that of reproducing the advertisements which appear in newspapers and periodicals. A selection of such advertising is here reproduced:

BELGIAN HARES—Flemish, Reds, Checkered Giants. Correspondence solicited. Prices attractive.

FOR SALE—My entire stock of Belgians, Flemish Giants and New Zealand Pedigreed stock. Write for prices.

RABBITRY FOR SALE—New Zealand, Giants, Belgians. Reared \$1,400 last year; 10 acres, house, barn, windmill, etc.



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BLACK FLEMISH GIANT BUCK

RABBITS FOR SALE—Belgian Hares, Flemish Giants, Angoras, New Zealands, etc. Price right, stock right.

LOOK—We have some good Flemish Giants in black, white and steel gray. Also New Zealand Reds. All stock pedigreed. For reasonable prices write.

PEDIGREED BELGIAN HARES—Also ear tags, punches, stock and breeding record cards, pedigree cards for variety rabbits. crate cards, etc. Price list free. Full set of samples 10 cents.

CHECKERED GIANTS

CHECKERED GIANT RABBITRY—Breeders of thoroughbred and pedigreed Checkered Giants. Snow white, jet black, steel gray Flemish Giants.

FLEMISH GIANTS

FLEMISH GIANTS—Winner of first prizes in the largest show in the state. Five to thirteen pounds. Two to ten dollars each. Also New Zealand Reds.

FOR SALE—A limited number of Commercial Giant rabbits, bred from the largest stock obtainable. Prices reasonable. State in first letter just what is wanted.

FLEMISH GIANTS EXCLUSIVELY—High class pedigreed stock from imported and domestic strains. Prices reasonable; inquires promptly answered.

FOR SALE—Flemish Giants, light gray, steel blacks. Bucks and does. Pedigreed. See my winnings at St. Louis, November, 1917; Chicago, December.

FOR SALE—A few choice Steel Gray Flemish Giants. From pedigreed and registered stock. Heavy variety. Weigh from 15 to 17 pounds. Stamp for reply.

HEAVY WEIGHT FLEMISH GIANTS and Checkered Giants; registered and pedigreed stock; youngsters and breeders at reasonable prices; perfect health. Stamp for reply.

FLEMISH GIANT and Rufus Red Belgian Hares—Pedigreed prize winning stock that have size, weight and color. Satisfaction.

HARES WANTED!

Belgian Hares, Flemish Giants, New Zealands

We want to buy all the Hares and Rabbits you can produce, four months of age and up. We want only first-class pedigreed stock, free from disease with smooth coats.

For several years we have bought from the largest breeders at Colorado Springs and Denver, and as our business increases we must continually have more. If your Hares prove satisfactory, we will contract to handle all you can produce.

Remember, we are not on our way to the biggest rabbit business in this country, but have arrived.

Give full description of your stock in first letter, correct age, weight and lowest price.

Come on, let's boom the Hare business. Get busy and raise some. Address.

AMERICA'S BEST STRAINS

English and Dutch

At the seven largest Eastern shows this season, I won 75 firsts, four times best Rabbit in show.

Judge Gibson says in his report of the Syracuse, N. Y., show: "The best lot of Dutch I ever judged in one show in my life. Some of them almost perfect." In such competition, with six entries, I won five firsts and one second.

Any of my stock for sale.

SPLENDID BREEDING STOCK FOR SALE

Can make immediate delivery of Registered Belgians and Flemish. All registered in the N. P. S. Association. Stock of unusual quality, all ages.

The foregoing ads were clipped from a recent issue of "Outdoor Enterprises," the leading commercial rabbit magazine of America, which is published at Kansas City, Mo., and they are fairly representative of the activity going on in the rabbit industry at present. Frankly, there is no intention of giving free advertising space to the advertisers shown, therefore, the addresses are not given.

The ads which follow were clipped from a recent issue of the American Poultry Advocate, and will serve to illustrate the interest in Commercial Rabbits which has been awakened amongst the unfortunate breeders of poultry, who have been operating mostly at a loss since the high prices of grain have prevailed:

HARES—RABBITS—PET STOCK

Belgian Hares

TEN FINEST Belgian bucks, eight months. Conover pedigreed stock, \$3.50 each. Ten six months, \$2.50 each.

PEDIGREED Belgian Hares, ear tags, dogs, poultry; illustrated catalogue and hare book, five stamps.

RUFUS RED BELGIAN HARES—Breeders, \$3.75 pair. Does or bucks, \$2 each. Young stock, 4 to 6 months old, \$1.25 each.

RAISE BELGIAN HARES FOR ME—I furnish magnificent young thoroughbred Rufus Red stock at \$3.00 each and buy all you raise at 30 to 60 cents per lb., live weight. Send ten cents for complete Breeder's Instruction Booklet.

LISTEN! RABBIT BREEDERS!

OUR handsome new supply catalog is just off the press; it prices and describes over 50 rabbit necessities that are essential to rabbit success. All you do is to write and ask for it and enclose a 1-cent stamp.

LOTS OF BELGIAN HARES—Bucks, Ten Flemish bucks, ready for service. Checkered Giants, German Greys, Lopears and Angoras. Exchanges made; no reply without stamp.

RAISE BELGIAN HARES—New Zealand Reds, Flemish Giants. Wonderfully interesting magazine, tells where to sell for \$2.00 to \$15.00 each. Also covers all other outdoor industries, 10 cents a copy (50 cents a year.)

Similar ads appear in Sunday newspapers throughout the country, and in the big rural magazines and weekly newspapers, as well as in prominent standard magazines, such as Popular Mechanics, Popular Science, the Country Gentleman, and in the magazines devoted to outdoor sports such as National Sportsman, Field and Stream, etc. They are an index to the far-reaching effects of advertising—advertising which has rendered the commercial rabbit industry permanent through the dissemination of information.

CHAPTER IV

THE COMMERCIAL RABBIT FOR MEAT

As a meat producer, the Commercial Rabbit has no equal. The meat is described as venison, and is white, fine-grained, palatable and far more nutritious than any other meat. It may be cooked in a variety of different ways, and so offers a decided relief to the housewife who despairs of ever finding something new under the sun to set before her men folks.

A clergyman, himself a breeder of Belgian Hares, contributes a very interesting article to a widely read publication. An excerpt from his article follows:

A word concerning the meat side of the industry. The East is just beginning to taste the delicious food. The man who has a contract to supply a certain Buffalo hotel once a week, finds it a hard task to get enough without paying exceedingly high prices for the hares.

Rabbit meat is simply delicious and when it is to be found in the markets and people have had a taste, the demand will be so great that every farmer will have to turn to the industry to supply it, and in supplying it he will make money, for the Belgian is raised to good eating size for 25 cents. What other meat can be produced so cheaply?

REV. CHARLES E. RHODES.

Of course, there is a right and a wrong way of cooking commercial rabbits. The venison is in itself very delicious, as anyone will bear witness who has picked a leg out of a cold pie on a hot summer day, but there are so many delightful dishes that can be quickly and simply prepared that it may be interesting to smack one's lips over the following instructions:

PREPARING HARES FOR THE TABLE

A hare at the weight of about four to five pounds is about the right thing for a splendid dinner. In killing, grasp the hare firmly by the hind legs, hanging his head downward, striking the animal a sharp, quick blow on the back of the head. The throat should be cut immediately and the hare thoroughly bled. Hang up by the gamble joints, just as you would hang up a sheep or hog. An opening should be made in the abdomen between the hind legs, and two or three times the carcass should be filled with water. To remove the hide, cut around the hind legs, cut across near the tail from one joint to the other and then turn the skin wrong side out, drawing toward the head carefully until the rabbit is skinned. Then



NEW ZEALAND BUCK

taking out the insides, saving the kidneys, cut off the feet at the first joint, wash carefully and then thoroughly dry with a cloth. The heart and liver may be saved, and the head, if you wish. Cut up the carcass and let stand in salt water for at least one hour. After it has been dressed, the hare may be kept two or three days. A few recipes for cooking the hare follow:

TO FRY

Old hares should never be fried, only the young. After cutting up, the pieces should be rolled in a mixture of pepper, salt and flour. Fry in hot lard. It takes about thirty-five to fifty minutes to cook thoroughly, according to the age and size.

A GOOD ROAST

Fill with dressing, made to suit the taste, well moistened with hot water. Sew up the carcass, sprinkle well with salt; put in your roasting pan some strips of pork laid over the carcass, or if you haven't the pork a few bits of butter. Bake in a medium oven from two and a half to four hours.

PRESSED RABBIT

Boil until well done. Take all meat from bones. Grind in meat grinder, season with salt and pepper to taste. Then pour over it the broth it was boiled in and press the same as chicken.

HARE SPANISH

One onion sliced, one chili pepper, three or four medium tomatoes. Put these into a stewpan with a small amount of water and let come to the boil. After cutting the hare in pieces, put into this as soon as it comes to a boil. Then add about a teaspoonful of salt and just enough hot water to cover. Just before it is done, thicken with flour and butter.

AN ONION ROAST

Take a small roasting pan, place a layer of onions in the bottom and, cutting the meat into pieces, put a layer of onions on this and alternate until you have filled your pan. In making an onion roast, a double roasting pan should be used. Do not use water, as the onions will furnish enough moisture to finish the roast.

RABBIT CURRIE

Cut into joints, putting in the stewpan a couple of tablespoonfuls of butter and a few slices of onion to taste. After it is well browned, add a good cupful of soup stock, then a tablespoonful flour and currie mixed smooth with a little water. Place this in the pan with pepper and salt to taste. If desired, a heaping teaspoonful of mushroom powder may be used. Let simmer gently for an hour or two; add about a tablespoonful lemon juice with a little parsley. Serve with boiled rice.

TO BROIL

They should be boiled in salted water about five minutes, then dried and put on the broiler as soon as possible. Season to taste.

RABBIT RECIPES

Rabbit—the meat of the epicure.

—Vesta S. Heath.

“Now good digestion wait on appetite
And health on both!”

—Shakespeare.

The housewife who must pay 20 or 22½ cents in the open market for Flemish, Belgian, or New Zealand Rabbits will find fried rabbit a satisfactory dish. But the one who raises them in her own back yard will find a variety of ways of cooking and using this excellent meat a necessity, that rabbit may be served several times a week without over-doing. Though some might doubt that this could be over-done. Money talks and so does rabbit raising when the grocery bills are lessened by raising your own meat at home.

POT ROAST RABBIT

Cut the rabbit, roll in flour, brown in hot fat, cover with boiling water, add salt, pepper, one carrot and one onion. Cover the kettle tightly, so that all the flavor will be retained. Simmer until tender. If an old rabbit, it will take two or three hours. Drop in dumplings fifteen minutes before serving. This recipe is suitable for the fireless cooker.

A BREAKFAST DISH

When preparing corn meal mush for frying, stir in one-half cup of chopped, cooked rabbit meat (well seasoned) just before turning mush into the pan to mould; a square, shallow

pan is best. Let cool over night. Cut in half-inch slices, roll in flour. and fry.

JELLIED RABBIT

One rabbit, one slice of onion, one bay leaf, six peppercorns, three stalks of celery, one envelope gelatine, one-half cup water.

Cook rabbit in boiling water until tender, or until the meat slips from the bones. Remove from the kettle. Add vegetables and spices to the broth with salt to taste. Cook until reduced to one quart. Strain, add gelatine softened in one-half cup of water. Place rabbit meat in a square mold and pour broth over it. Set aside in a cold place. Garnish with celery leaves and stars cut from pimentos. Serve in thin slices.

SOME "PET" BELGIAN HARE RECIPES

By F. C. Cross, Bocring, Colo.

Roast Rabbit—Place the rabbit or hare, carefully dressed, but whole, into a kettle. Add a quart of water and a pinch of soda and stew until slightly tender, then take from the broth and stuff with well seasoned bread crumbs, which have been moistened with the broth. Wrap the carcass with twine and lay in a pan, spread with butter, sprinkle with salt and pepper, and bake to a rich brown. Serve with a brown gravy made from the broth, season by adding a little browned onion or garlic.

Roast Rabbit No. 2—Have the rabbit dry, truss it, and stuff as follows: Beef suet, chopped fine; a few bread crumbs; a little thyme, marjorm, and savory; add a little lemon peel; pepper and salt, mixed together with an egg; put this into the carcass and sew it up. Suspend it before a good fire, but do not put it too close at first; baste it well with butter or veal drippings, and dredge it well with flour two or three times. When it is sufficiently roasted, place the rabbit in a hot dish; put a little water in a sauce pan, a lump of butter rolled in flour, and pour the gravy in, from the dripping pan; boil and pour over the rabbit and serve.

Stewed Rabbit—Wash the rabbits well; cut them in pieces, and put them in to scald for a few minutes. Melt a piece of butter in which fry or brown the rabbits for a short time. When slightly browned, dust in some flour; then add

as much gravy or hot water as will make sufficient soup. Put in onions or garlic, catsup, pepper and salt, according to taste. Stew for an hour slowly.

Fried Rabbit—Let the rabbit soak for several hours, or over night, in salt water. Roll in flour, salt and pepper, then fry until brown. If the wild taste of game is objectionable, this may be removed by first parboiling in water in which a little salt and a slice or two of onion has been added, then fry as above.

Rabbit Fricassee—After dressing, let stand about two hours in water with two teaspoonfuls of salt and one of soda. Rinse well and skin off all the second thin skin. Then cook until well done, in as little water as possible, in which a little salt has been added. Remove the rabbit and roll in seasoned flour, then fry in hot lard until nicely browned. In the meantime, add two cups of milk to a little of the broth, return the rabbit, let cook fifteen minutes, add a little thickening made of flour and water and bring to boiling point.

Barbecued Rabbit—Take a nice, plump, young rabbit before it is cut up, wipe dry and make eight or ten gashes across the backbone with a sharp knife. Now brush with olive oil and broil before a clear fire, turning often so as to cook evenly on all sides. Lay on a hot dish, season with salt and pepper and add plenty of butter, then set in the oven long enough for the butter to thoroughly soak in. Heat in a granite cup or small pan two tablespoonfuls of vinegar, and one of ordinary mustard. Bring this to the boiling point, and quickly brush this over the rabbit. Garnish with parsley or watercress and serve with current or other tart jelly.

CHAPTER V

HOW IT SOLVES THE MEAT PROBLEM

The foregoing chapter on dressing and cooking, while relating to the Belgian Hare, is equally applicable to the other types of Commercial Rabbits. As meat, they all taste the same, and all yield the same percentage of nutrition.

But the mere fact that the Commercial Rabbit is good for food does not signify anything important—the big question is—can it be produced cheaply?

Farmers nowadays prefer to sell their corn at high prices, rather than feed it to perishable live stock and wait another year or so for returns that are only sure if the stock lives, and the price of meat does not fall lower than that of grain. As a matter of fact, it is cheaper to sell the grain, or rather more profitable.

The cattle supply has been falling off for ten years, it is reported from many reliable sources, and it is said that twenty years will be required to catch up with the normal demand for meat at reasonable prices. This is plausible enough when you consider that a cow has only one calf a year, and that calf does not become of breeding age until two years later. Thus it takes three years before you begin to see any results worth speaking of in the cattle business. In sheep and hogs, the progress is swifter, but the returns are not striking in any sense.

Poultry raising is being looked upon with distrust by experienced breeders, since the high prices of grain have prevailed. It is said by many that, on a small plant, it costs about \$2.00 per dozen to produce one's own eggs, and about \$1.00 to raise a 50 cent chicken. Manifestly, conditions of this sort will not attract much capital or energy to these industries.

But let us consider the Commercial Rabbit. It is raised in a hutch only a few feet square. You build upward instead of outward—that is, a fairly big rabbitry can be erected on a few square feet of ground space by building it in tenement form.

The Commercial Rabbit breeds all the year around, and there is very little guess-work about it. You can never tell how many eggs a hen will lay—or even whether she will lay any—and you can't tell whether the eggs will be fertile when



STEEL GRAY FLEMISH BUCK

laid. On the other hand, it is possible to raise a definite number of litters per year from each rabbit, and possible to figure on an average number of young in each litter.

There is no other animal or fowl that multiplies so rapidly as the rabbit. Scrub rabbits and game rabbits produce as many as eight litters a year, while carefully handled Commercial Rabbits produce about five, or at least four. In each litter, an average of seven may be conservatively expected, so that about thirty rabbits can be raised from one doe in a year. If killed for meat when they weigh five pounds apiece, one hundred and fifty pounds of meat have been produced from one doe in a year.

But many breeders kill off only the bucks, keeping the does for breeding purposes. The young does may be bred when eight months old—even earlier, so that the possible production from a single doe in one year is lost in a maze of figures. Suffice it to say, it is astoundingly big, and the world's meat supply can be increased indefinitely in a very short time, if vigorous advertising is employed to educate the people to the possibilities of the industry.

As to feed cost, most breeders report it so negligible that they never figure it in their cost of production. Commercial Rabbits will thrive on table scraps, such as stale bread, the peelings of vegetables and fruits, waste cooked vegetables, ordinarily thrown away as garbage, used tea leaves mixed with bread crumbs, grass, lawn clippings, leaves, barks and scraps from the back yard garden. They eat any kind of hay or grain, any kind of meal, or any kind of cattle fodder.

It is always best to order the stock before beginning to build the hutches, because the average breeder is always running to capacity and will require at least a couple of weeks' time in which to fill the order. This time can be used in building hutches and making ready for the stock.

CHAPTER VI

PERTINENT STATISTICS

The bulletin on Belgian Hares and Commercial Rabbits issued by the Department of Agriculture of the United States Government gives as the cost of feeding and care, six cents per pound. This figure has, no doubt, been arrived at by comparing the declared costs of different breeders, or from the actual records of that branch of the department devoted to Commercial Rabbit Culture.

A good many successful breeders, however, declare that this cost is too high, and that rabbits can be raised more cheaply. The following figures, obtained from a big breeder in Missouri, are interesting:

FEBRUARY, 1918

Average stock, 300 Rabbits per day

FEED COST

3 bushels oats, 85c per bushel.....	\$2.55
50 pounds alfalfa meal, .022c per pound.....	1.10
1 bale prairie hay.	1.25

For the month. \$4.90

It is probable that, added to this feed, was a great deal of stale bread and scrap vegetables which were probably obtained for nothing.

A report from another breeder, giving the feed cost of sixty rabbits, is of interest because it shows the cost of feeding roots.

FEED COST FOR SIXTY RABBITS

Month of January, 1918

Sugar beets.	\$1.00
Oats.85
Clover hay.88

\$2.73

NUTRITIVE VALUE OF MEAT

The food value of rabbit venison is recognized by nearly all doctors. A New York physician, writing to the California Cultivator, gives the following interesting table:

Beef gives.	55	per cent net nutriment
Mutton gives.	65	per cent net nutriment
Pork gives.	75	per cent net nutriment
Chicken gives.	50	per cent net nutriment
Rabbit gives.	83	per cent net nutriment

This doctor recommends Belgian Hare venison for invalids and old people—for consumptives and anaemic patients.



CHAPTER VII

THE COMMERCIAL RABBIT BUSINESS

The name "Commercial Rabbits" was first used by a St. Louis breeder in 1917, to indicate all heavy breeds of rabbits raised in hutches. The name has been adopted by nearly all breeders now. Its importance was not at first fully realized until that unless domestic rabbits were universally declared to be commercial rabbits, they would fall under restrictive laws passed by the different states to govern the sale and shipment of game rabbits. For instance, the average breeder of Belgian Hares would be shocked and outraged if he should be arrested for shipping rabbits out of Pennsylvania, and yet there would be danger of it unless the rabbits were declared to be commercial rabbits, and not game rabbits.

The growth of the commercial rabbit business during the past two years has been so rapid that there are no available statistics to indicate the volume of business that has been transacted.

Most commercial rabbit businesses are conducted by mail. Advertisements are placed in various newspapers, magazines and class journals. These advertisements usually invite an inquiry, and the inquiry is followed up with printed matter which educates the prospect to a realization of the value of domestic rabbits for food and fancy and invites an order for selected breeding stock.

The demand for all types of commercial rabbits is so large and so constant that no advertiser can hope to raise enough stock to meet that demand.

CHAPTER VIII

HOW TO BEGIN

The best way to begin raising commercial rabbits is to order the stock at once. Having ordered it, the prospective breeder will have to hustle and prepare his hutches. Without this incentive, it is more than likely that the prospective breeder will keep putting off the purchase of his stock until finally his interest cools and the opportunity is buried in the grave of dead ambitions.

The question of what type or breed of commercial rabbits to begin with is largely one of opinion. While more Belgian Hares are sold than any other type of commercial rabbit, this does not necessarily mean that the Belgian Hare is the most reliable breed—although the dyed-in-the-wool Belgian breeder honestly thinks so.

It is well, therefore, to bear in mind the various qualities of commercial rabbits when deciding upon the type to raise.

1. The Belgian Hare is said to be one of the most prolific of domestic rabbits. The litters contain from five to eleven, or even thirteen, young. Of these, about eight can be raised if some skill is exercised in feeding the mother doe and the litter. The Belgian weighs from seven to nine pounds at maturity, increasing in weight at the rate of about one pound per month from weaning age.

2. The Flemish Giant Rabbit is also very prolific. It bears from five to nine young in each litter, but the weight of these rabbits is so much greater than that of the Belgian that they produce a great deal more stock, pound for pound, than any other type of commercial rabbit.

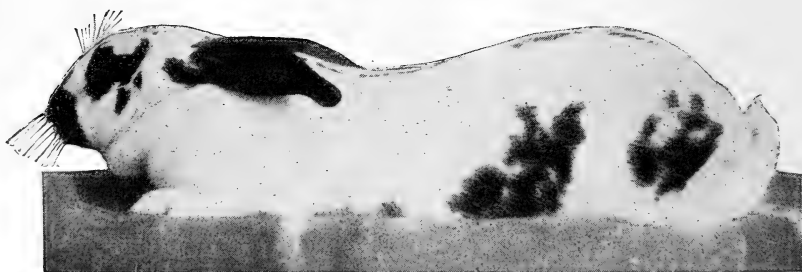
3. The New Zealand Red Rabbit is quite as prolific as the Belgian Hare. The chief argument made by the breeders of new Zealands is that it eats less and matures more quickly than any other type of commercial rabbit. The New Zealand attains a weight of from nine to eleven pounds at maturity, usually beating the Belgian Hare by about two pounds.

The next question is how many to start with. This depends upon the amount of money the prospective breeder can invest. Most breeders begin with a trio—or two does and one buck.

Many beginners hesitate over the question of whether to buy young or mature stock. This, again, is largely a question of how much money is available for a start. If young stock is bought the beginner must have patience while waiting for the stock to reach breeding age. Young or baby stock, of course, costs much less than mature stock, but young animals need more care than mature ones.

The processes by which the beginner enters the field, therefore, are as follows:

1. Decide upon the kind of rabbits to buy.
2. Decide upon what age to select.
3. Order the stock.
4. Build the hutches.





YOUNG NEW ZEALAND RED DOE

CHAPTER IX

HOUSES OR HUTCHES

A cage for a rabbit is called a hutch. The simplest way to make a hutch is to cover half the open front of a big box with poultry wire and the other half with a door—and, Presto! your hutch is made.

But the main idea in hutch building is to make it easy to clean out, roomy, free from draughts and yet well ventilated. Where boxes are used for hutches, it is wise to make a sort of ventilator near the ceiling of the hutch. An oblong hole covered with wire will do, but it should have a sort of awning, made of either wood or canvas, to keep the rain from driving in. Little details like that may not seem important to the mind of the beginner, but they are very important indeed. It should be remembered that the rabbit has to live in the box, week in and week out, and that it must have fresh air to breathe, just the same as a human being.

When building special hutches, it is a good idea to have the floor of each hutch slope gently to the front, so that the muck and moisture will drain away. To build hutches with sloping floors, it is only necessary to erect a series of shelves, one above the other, and to divide these shelves into hutches by means of either wooden or wire partitions, and to cover the front of each hutch with a door made of wire netting nailed over a framework of wood. To render the hutches weather-tight, a drop curtain of burlap may be nailed to the top of the hutch and let down over the front on stormy nights or during the winter.

If boxes are used for hutches, they may be stacked one on top of the other, just the same as shelf hutches.

Hutches may be kept either indoors or out. If built outdoors, it is a good idea to erect a shed over them, so as to keep the direct rays of the violent summer sun from striking the roof and sides of the hutch and making it like an oven.

When building hutches indoors, one of the main things to provide for is sunshine. Rabbits love to bask in the winter sun or in the early morning summer sun, and it does them a world of good. Remember that sunshine is the greatest germicide. If, therefore, the hutches are erected in a shed, it is a good idea to cut a large window in the south wall of the shed to admit light. This window may be covered with wire netting and, in winter, if desired, with a glazed sash.

Sunshine, however, is not absolutely essential, and many

breeders are raising splendid stock in a dim corner of a big barn. Thus, if any prospective rabbit farmer has a building or part of a building available for raising stock, the mere fact that little or no sunshine reaches the spot should not for a moment deter him from engaging in the business.

The main essentials in hutch building, then, are as follows: Dry floors, protection from rain and draughts, sunshine, if possible, and ventilation.

A PRACTICAL RABBITRY

The rabbitry herewith presented is 6x10 feet and 7½ feet high at gable point, while under eaves the height is 6½ feet. It contains twelve hutches, in three separate stories, each hutch being 3x5x2 feet. Hutches are open on one end, covered with one-inch poultry netting. Drop curtain for stormy days. Nest box in back part of each hutch. Double doors held in position by screen door coil springs. Partitions made of wood. North side same as south side; east side same as west side.

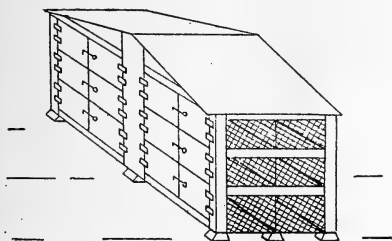


FIG. 1

Rabbitry

Wherever possible, this rabbitry should be placed under trees, so as to give shade in summer. Have wire-covered ends face east and west, in order to give each row of hutches sun in winter time.

First—Make frame in four parts, two parts as in Fig. 3 and two parts as in Fig. 4.

TO MAKE

Parts of frame as in Fig. 3 are made as follows:

Two outside uprights are 1x6x6½; middle upright, 1x12x7½. Cross-pieces are 1x6x10. Two outer upright pieces are nailed so as to protrude ¾ inch (or exact thickness of board) on either end of cross-pieces. Gable piece is made by cutting board 1x12x5 diagonally into two equal parts, as in Fig. 5.

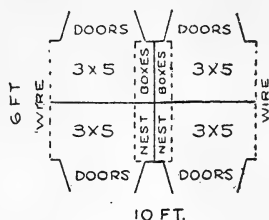
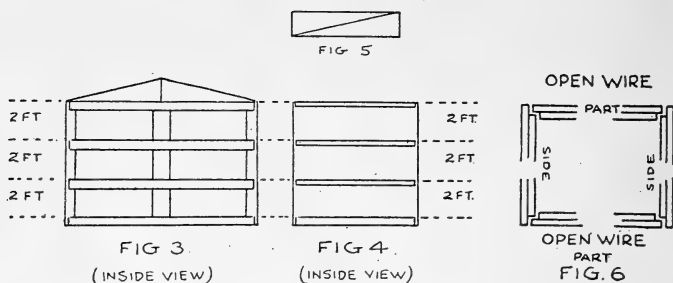


FIG. 2

Ground Plan



Parts of frame, as in Fig. 4, are made thus: Uprights are $1 \times 6 \times 6\frac{1}{2}$; lower cross-piece, $1 \times 6 \times 5$ feet $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches; three upper cross-pieces, $1 \times 4 \times 5$ feet $10\frac{1}{2}$ inches.

Next set up parts of frame on cement blocks, nailing corners as shown in Fig. 6.

Now, being sure corners are placed at perfect rectangle, begin to lay floors. Use ceiling (fir is worked more easily than hard pine), putting grooved side downward. First, however, put a $1 \times 6 \times 6$ board through center of frame, running parallel with and exactly below gable, nailing it so as to stand on edge, even with top of lower cross-pieces of frame parts, this together with lower cross-pieces, to form foundation on which to nail lower floor. Now, using 10-foot ceiling, lay lower floor, nailing strips of ceiling lengthwise of building.

Next, take a piece of one-inch poultry netting two feet wide and a few inches longer than six feet and nail it to the inside of fronts of lower hutches. Do the same on either open front end.

Then put in partitions for lower set of four hutches. (See ground plan, Fig. 2). A handy way of making and putting in partitions is shown in Fig. 7.

Next, put in nest boxes for lower set of four hutches. Each nest box is made of two boards $1 \times 12 \times 3$, which are nailed together in the form of a rectangle, a hole having been cut into one end for animals to pass through, and then hinged to back wall of each hutch. (See Figs. 8, 9 and 10, and also Fig. 2).

Fig. 8 shows a nest box ready for use; Fig. 9, nest box hooked out of the way for cleaning or inspection.

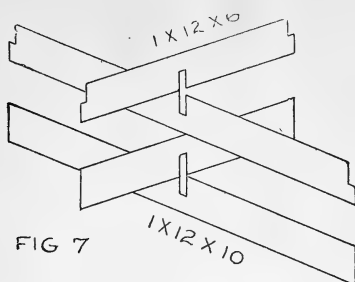


FIG 7

Now lay second floor, put on poultry netting, put in partitions and nest boxes; third floor, etc., till all is done. On top of upper partitions another board 1x12x6 and another roof-piece made as in Fig. 5 are needed.

Whereupon roof may be nailed and doors hung, which finishes rabbitry. Doors should be 22 inches wide, which is four inches wider than openings, which are 18 inches, so as to lap over on outside. They may be made of 12-inch and 10-inch boards fastened together with cleats. A good plan is to fit double door to close over each other diagonally. See Fig. 11.

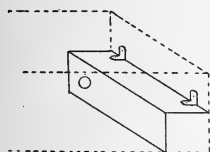


FIG. 8

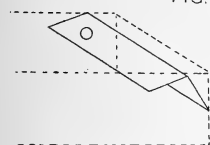


FIG 9

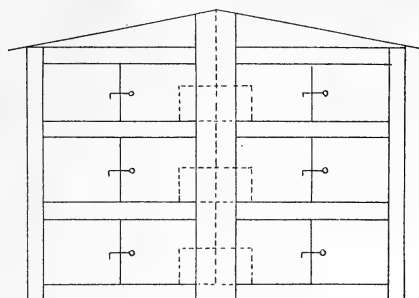


FIG 10

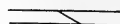


FIG. 11

Doors are held in position by screen door coil springs and may be hooked, only one hook being necessary for one double door.

For the benefit of those who desire a smaller rabbitry, Figs. 12 and 13 show one-half as large, with single row of

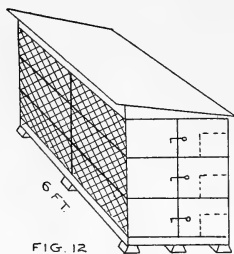


FIG. 12

5 FT.

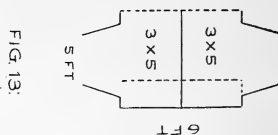


FIG. 13

GROUND PLAN

hutches, made practically the same as one with double rows. Where this single kind is used, open wire front should face south.

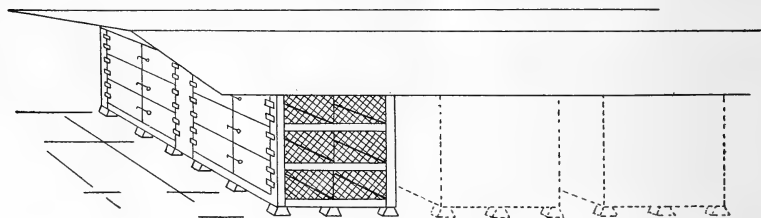


FIG. 14

The big breeder will do well to use double kind, placing a number of them in a series under one roof and leaving aisles between them, ends of roof projecting to give attendant shelter in bad weather. See Fig. 14. Also where single rows of hutches (Fig. 12) are used, they may be placed in series under one roof, ends of roof projecting as in Fig. 14. Aisles in this cut are $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet wide. Ends of roof also extend $2\frac{1}{2}$ feet.

CHAPTTR X.

FEEDING

Rabbits eat anything a sheep or a horse will eat—and a great deal more. Any kind of grain is good, and any kind of hay. If this general statement puzzles the reader, the following table of feeding will shed more light on the subject.

MORNING—

Oats
Stale bread
Rolled barley.
Field corn (on the cob)
Grass
Bran and oats mash
Beets
Used tea leaves and meal

EVENING—

Alfalfa
Alfalfa meal
Carrots
Bark of trees
Dry bran
Rutabago
Clover
Vegetable scraps

This does not mean that the breeder must give all the different feeds indicated above. He may use any of them. It is a good idea, however, to vary the feed a bit.

Most breeders feed twice a day—morning and evening. Some breeders, however, feed only once a day. As to the quantity required for each rabbit, this is something that cannot be definitely set down. The thing to remember is that the rabbits should clean up everything given them. If any feed is left over from a previous meal when the next feeding time comes, it is best to cut down the rabbit's allowance by exactly what was left.

The question of whether rabbits should be fed green stuff exclusively is one that has been answered both ways by many breeders. The majority of successful breeders, however, regard oats or barley as a necessary part of the rabbit's rations. It is not safe to feed baby rabbits green stuff—it should be fed only very sparingly, and it should never be given wet, as it has a tendency to cause diarrhea in young stock.



A MASTEDONION BUCK

The Largest Variety of Rabbits in Existence. We have Records
Showing That Some of Them Reach the Enormous
Weight of 22 Pounds

CHAPTER XI. BREEDING AND SELECTING

Commercial rabbits will breed a maximum of six times a year, but it is probable that the does would not last long if bred that often. Most breeders try to get from four to five litters a year.

From five to ten, or even more, young ones occur in each litter, but since the doe has but eight teats, it is rare that more than eight can be raised successfully. Ten young ones in a litter, however, have been raised time and again by breeders. It is necessary to feed the doe milk-producing foods in order that she may provide sufficient nourishment for the litter. Carrots and other roots and vegetables are best for this purpose, although plenty of oats and hay should also be fed.

Commercial rabbits are bred just like cattle—that is, the buck is always kept by himself and, when used, the doe is placed in his hutch. The service need occupy only a few minutes. If the doe is willing, the buck mounts, and he will immediately effect the service and roll over on his side or fall backward. Until he rolls over in this way, the service has not been effected.

If the doe is unwilling, she will either hug the floor or run away, and, after waiting about five or ten minutes, it is best to take her out if the buck has not effected the service. The doe should be tried every day until she takes the buck.

Virgin does do not readily breed, and it is necessary to be persistent in placing them with the buck, trying them each day until they do take him. After a doe has once been bred, however, she rarely gives any trouble on this score.

SELECTING

Selecting is a process that requires considerable skill, which is acquired only by experience. Selection is simply the method of choosing parents to produce better offspring than themselves. Many factors enter into the problem. Thus, a rabbit cannot be heavier than the capacity of its frame or bony structure. When selecting breeding specimens for producing a heavy strain, it is necessary to select large-boned animals. Some animals are round and fat as a football but have no length to speak of. When handling specimens of this kind for breeding, it is wise to mate them with a long-framed, huge-boned animal, in order to combine the desirable features of each.



BELGIAN HARE BUCK

CHAPTER XII.

CARE OF THE YOUNG

The problem of caring for the young may be summed up in the single word "horse-sense"—that is, common sense should be used. Thus, many breeders complain that they lose young rabbits from a complaint known as "slobbers." When ailing with this, young rabbits slaver at the mouth and their fur becomes wet, while their whole aspect is one of profound dejection and distress.

It is caused by indigestion. The little stomachs being used only to a milk diet obtained from the teat of the mother doe, they are not able to at once digest the heavy feed given them immediately after weaning. This would seem at first to be a very discouraging matter to grapple with, but such is not the case.

If the reader should eat nothing but raw food, he would also get the equivalent of slobbers or terrible indigestion—that's why human beings cook their food. The same thing applies to young animals. If the food of young rabbits is cooked, it will not give them indigestion.

Thus, instead of giving oats right out of the feed sack, it is best to put them in a pan or dish and cover them with water. Then place the pan or dish on a fire or gas burner and let the oats cook until the water has steamed away. Now add a little salt to the oats, mix with bran, and feed. The result will be a thick mash, and the rabbits will enjoy it. It is also good for older stock.

When weaned, the young ones should be given a hutch somewhat bigger than the hutch in which they were born, so that they can romp and grow. It is important to keep this hutch warm and clean and dry. The floor should be covered with sawdust, dry leaves, straw or hay, and water should be before the stock at all times. It is a good idea to place a box or platform inside the hutch for the young ones to jump on for exercise and play.

At four months old, the sexes should be separated, as at this age the bucks will begin to fight, and there is always danger of a young doe being bred too early to a brother.



A BUNCH OF FINE STEEL GRAY FLEMISH
Forty-eight Pounds at Seven Months

It is easy to tell the bucks at this age, as the testicles are plainly visible, slightly forward between the hind legs, while if the organ is pressed upon with thumb and forefinger the sex is otherwise determinable. In the does, an oblique slit will appear under this pressure, and in the bucks a round hole.

Brothers and sisters must not be mated.

Stale bread is good for rabbits. It is already cooked, so it does not cause any complications. Bread, it will be remembered, is made by baking it in an oven.

A very little green stuff is good for baby rabbits—just a sprig or so a day per rabbit. It conditions them. But if large quantities of green stuff are heaped into a hutch, the young ones will eat until they get the diarrhea, and they will begin to die, one by one.

When the old doe has been bred, she must be kept in a hutch by herself. During a period of from ten days to one hour before she is due to deliver, she will build a nest of straw or hay, which she will line with fur torn from her breast. A nesting box, high and roomy, should be provided inside the hutch, so that she can build her nest out of sight and away from wind and weather.

The day after the young ones are born, the mother does should be removed gently from the hutch, and the young ones counted into a hat or basket. They must not be allowed to get cold. If there happens to be a dead one in the litter, it should be thrown out, and the rest replaced. After that, the old doe may be put back in the hutch, and the nest should not be bothered again until the young ones begin to toddle out, which will be in about two weeks. At this time, the nest box should be cleaned out thoroughly and fresh straw or hay placed in it.

At six weeks old, the young ones may be weaned. It is best to take say two away from the doe each day, until all are weaned. The young ones should now be fed cooked oats and a little green stuff, with plenty of clover and alfalfa hay.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE UTILITY

The utility is known as that end of the industry which is concerned chiefly with the production of heavy animals intended to produce meat stock, and while the finest breeding stock of utility types costs good money, it is necessary to get fine stock in order to have a good foundation on which to build up a herd.

There is a ready market for the meat at the commission houses everywhere, and direct to the hotels and restaurants. Prices vary from 20 to 35 cents per pound, while assemblers of breeding stock will at present pay up to 30 cents per pound for trios to be used for breeding purposes.

The skins can be sold readily. There are several firms in St. Louis which offer good prices for skins. These skins are used in the manufacture of felt hats and are also dyed and specially prepared to sell as imitation furs. Flemish Giant skins are especially valuable for this purpose.

When breeding for utility, it is best not to pay much attention to the advice on breeding given by notable fanciers in their books, as they advise raising only small litters, and only one or two litters a year. This advice is manifestly all wrong when you are breeding for volume. The idea is to get the largest possible litters, and as many litters each year as the doe can safely stand. Experience will teach just how big the litters should be, and how many litters the doe can stand. If the doe falls off in weight, it is best to give her a rest for some weeks. Each doe is a study in herself, and one doe can stand more than another. It all depends upon the vigor of the stock.

CHAPTER XIV.

DISEASES AND REMEDIES

The Commercial Rabbit is singularly immune from sickness if kept clean and fed regularly. If, however, the rabbit takes cold from draughts or dampness, a complaint known as snuffles will set in, most likely. The rabbit gets a snotty nose, and its fur becomes rough and disordered. Colds are always accompanied by fever, and so the first thing to do is to check the fever. This can be accomplished by placing a few drops of Aconite in the drinking water. Tincture of Aconite may be bought at any drug store. A dime's worth will be enough to last for months and months. The dose is about twelve drops to the gallon of water. This should be continued daily for a week or more.

Then the secretions of mucous in the nasal passages must be removed, and this can be accomplished by squirting a strong antiseptic up each nostril twice a day. The best antiseptic for this purpose is one put up in a collapsible tube, because the end of the tube can be applied to the nostril and the stuff squirted up by pressing the tube. It is important to see that the antiseptic is not strong enough to burn the animal. Thus, solutions of carbolic acid or Lysol cannot be used. The best antiseptic for rabbits is called HIKE ANTI-SEPTIC. It is put up in tinfoil collapsible tubes and is sold by most drug stores. It costs from 19 to 25 cents per tube. Wicks Salve is also recommended by one of our leading Judges. These remedies are not intended for rabbits, but are sold as a general antiseptic to be used by human beings for wounds and skin troubles as well as catarrhal conditions of the nose and throat. The reason it is recommended in this book is because it cannot harm the rabbit and always corrects the condition. Any antiseptic that has like qualities may be used with equal effectiveness.

After the fever has been checked, and the secretions of mucous expelled from the nasal passages, the rabbit will rapidly recover. Powdered bluestone sprinkled over oats or alfalfa meal hastens recovery. Snuffles in rabbits is practically the same thing as glanders in horses, and any treatment good for glanders is usually good for snuffles in rabbits.

DIARRHEA

Diarrhea is often caused by feeding wet green stuff or too much green stuff, and the remedy is dry feed and milk to drink. Diarrhea can be detected easily, as the droppings will be soft, and the hutch disagreeably dirty.

WORMS

Worms are rare in rabbits. Wash blueing is good for worms, or any good worm remedy used for other stock. The ailment causes the animal to become thin and ematiated, and no time should be lost in getting rid of the parasites.

POT BELLY

Pot Belly is usually caused by overfeeding, and it occurs most often in young stock about two or three months old. The ailing rabbits should be starved for a whole day and a little green stuff given until the condition is removed. Exercise is necessary, and it is better if the rabbit can be turned loose on a big floor. Pot Belly is easily detected. The belly of the rabbit becomes distended as though the animal had been blown up with a bicycle pump. A good dose of castor oil helps.

ROT AND MANGE

Rot and Mange are very rare, but the disease is often fatal. The animal becomes covered with scabs and grows thin. Rot and Mange are treated under one heading here because the average breeder is unable to detect whether the rabbit has one or the other. The remedy is a mixture of sulphur and lard, which should be rubbed over the sores. The breeder who keeps his hutches clean will never be troubled with these ugly complaints.

SLOBBERS

Slobbers often attacks young rabbits just weaned. It is nothing but acute indigestion. The little rabbit slavers at the mouth, and its fur becomes wet around its mouth, forelegs and upper breast. The rabbit should be starved for twelve hours and salt rubbed in its mouth and on its forepaws. The food thereafter should be cooked to aid digestion. Slobbers is easy to cure.

PNEUMONIA

Rabbits may catch pneumonia if colds are neglected, or if the rabbits are kept in damp, cold hutches and given improper or insufficient food. Pneumonia is lung fever, and the fever must be checked by giving Aconite just as in cases of Snuffles. A good physic should be administered—castor oil or any good cathartic. The sufferer must be kept warm and fed green stuff very sparingly, while grains must be cooked before being fed. Pneumonia can be detected by listening to the breathing of the rabbit. A crepitant rattle will be heard in the lungs.

EAR CANKER

Ear canker often affects Commercial Rabbits, especially Flemish Giants and New Zealand Reds. A thick, caked substance forms in the ear, and it should be removed with a hair pin or a blunt piece of wood especially shaped for the purpose. After removing the canker, the inside of the ear should be treated with salve or a good antiseptic, such as Hike Antiseptic. Ear canker is not dangerous and can be removed in a day or so.

ABSCESSSES

Abscesses or boils occasionally affect both wild and domestic rabbits. They are caused mostly by bites which become infected by germs from the dirt or dung. When the swelling is ripe, slip the fur away and lance the swelling with a sharp knife or old razor kept for the purpose, squeeze out the pus as gently as possible, and apply salve or antiseptic. These are not dangerous.

CONSTIPATION

Constipation is not a common complaint, but if the absence of droppings is noticed, and the rabbit sits in a corner in evident distress, give a good dose of castor oil, or try feeding nothing but green stuff for a day or two.

ADMINISTERING MEDICINES

The beginner is often puzzled as to how to administer the medicine. Aconite is given in the drinking water. Some other medicines are given mixed with the feed. But if the rabbit refuses to eat, the medicine has to be forced into its mouth. The bunny will not open its teeth, and the strongest man will have great difficulty in forcing them open. However, the rabbit has no teeth on the side, so the lips can be opened and the medicine poured in through a thin necked bottle or a thin funnel. The rabbit should be held on its back with a sack wrapped around its feet to prevent it from struggling. It should be held on its back until the medicine runs down its throat and the rabbit is seen to swallow.

Ten drops of Aconite to a gallon of water twice a week will keep off many disorders and keep your stock in good condition.

There are many good remedies, specially prepared for the above ailments. Any of the leading Pet Stock Publications will supply you with the addresses of Dealers of Remedies.

CHAPTER XV

BIG SUCCESSES

A lot is heard about sensational successes lately with Commercial Rabbits. These tales are for the most part quite true. Several young men throughout the country have made comfortable fortunes. The demand appears to be many times greater than the supply.

THE FUTURE

The future of Commercial Rabbits is pregnant with possibilities. There is nothing to discourage. While many diseases are described in this book, it does not follow that the beginner will be troubled with any of them. Clean hutches and regular feeding will prevent diseases.

It is more than probable that Commercial Rabbits will be raised much more widely than poultry from now on. Certain it is that no poultry plants have grown so rapidly as have the big rabbitries of the country.

CHAPTER XVI

PROLIFICACY

A poulterer in Columbia, Illinois, reports that when he raised New Zealand Reds in California, it was his custom to place the buck with the doe about ten days after each litter was born. He admits that he acted in ignorance of the real principles of Commercial Rabbit breeding, but he still insists that he got as many as eight litters a year from his does, and that his does were always healthy. He fed green stuff exclusively.

It is a certainty that wild rabbits must become pregnant again immediately after having one litter, because a doe is always red hot at that time and will take the buck in an instant. Wild rabbits, however, do not breed during the winter months.

A breeder of common rabbits in Hartselle, Alabama, reports that he lets his stock run loose in ground pens, allowing them to burrow in the ground. The bucks run with the does. He says his rabbits multiply so fast that he cannot keep track of them at all, and is of the impression that does bear eight or ten litters a year.

A dentist in De Soto, Missouri, a breeder of New Zealand Reds, declares that he breeds his does twelve days after they have a litter, and that he never loses either the young ones or the breeding does.

These facts are presented for what they are worth. They are not intended as advice to beginners. Generally speaking, it is a bad policy to breed does more than five times a year.



WHITE GIANT DOE—A BEAUTIFUL SPECIMEN

(Following articles taken from "OUTDOOR ENTERPRISES," a publication devoted to rabbits, covies, fur-bearing animals and other outdoor industries.)

RABBITS AND WAR

By C. P. Gilmore

With our country at war and our government officials calling on everyone to produce food there is but one thing that can happen to the rabbit industry of this country and that one thing is something little short of a boom. Never before in the history of the industry in this country has there been the demand for rabbit meat such as there is today and never in the history of the industry has there been such prices paid for said meat. And breeding stock? Why, breeders all over the country report that they can't begin to fill their orders, the reason being that every one wants to keep a few rabbits and raise their own meat or else they wish enough to raise for marketing.

In this article it will be my aim to introduce the rabbit and its commercial possibilities rather than to acquaint the reader with successful methods of raising and selling.

The people of the United States are just beginning to realize the true value of this little animal as an article of food. The past two years have seen a great development of the rabbit industry and thousands of families are now raising rabbits to help reduce the high cost of living while thousands of others are profiting from raising them for market or for breeding stock.

In taking up the culture of the rabbit as a commercial proposition we are away behind European countries. France, for instance, during the year 1912 sold through its municipal markets some eighty million rabbits, to say nothing of the millions sold otherwise. Before the war London was using over 500,000 a week, mostly imported from Belgium. This little country was earning over twelve millions of dollars from her rabbits yearly, the most of which were exported to England.

The rabbit business is not a "get-rich-quick" proposition, but a good legitimate business which if carried on right will bring good returns. During the Belgian Hare boom many

men made small fortunes from selling pedigreed animals. But that was a boom such as we hope will never occur again, for the Belgian is but now recovering from it.

In the breeding branch one must aim to produce the very best quality, vigor and health being the most important factors. In exhibition stock there is the standard to breed to, and the nearer a rabbit can be bred to its standard the more valuable it is.

Some of our college professors have said that on account of the disease prevailing among rabbits they can not be raised profitably. Twenty years ago these same professors probably said the same thing about chickens, for at that time few people knew how to raise chickens right. They had to learn. Today very few people know the right way to raise rabbits. They are learning. I do not think it is possible for one to raise any other animal in such large numbers with less mortality.

Cleanliness, sanitation and system are the factors of success. Rabbits cannot be raised with the disregard of sanitation often shown to a hog, and it is useless to try it; they are naturally very dainty and cleanly and if confined to a filthy hutch will respond accordingly.

Rabbits cannot be raised on the ground unless the runs are changed every three or four weeks. The Coccidia germ, which is the domestic rabbits' greatest enemy, breeds very rapidly in the ground, which becomes poisoned by the continual urinating of the rabbit.

As to the cost of raising rabbits for market, will say that it depends altogether on how you feed, how much of the feed you raise and where you are located. We can raise market stock for 11 cents dressed (this is feed cost), and they will sell for 35 cents dressed. As an example of feed cost in the East, will quote from Mr. C. I. Hunt's letter of the 14th as to what it costs him in New York: "In a recent test to determine the exact cost of raising rabbits for meat purposes we took twenty-two and placed them in a run by themselves, keeping a strict account of all feed used. The result is shown herein. The twenty-two weighed 118 pounds when sold and brought \$20.31. Expenses: feed, \$7.08; express and commission, \$4.43; total cost, \$11.51; leaving a net profit of \$8.80, or 40 cents each. Had they been sold at home they would

have brought a net profit of \$13.23, or 60 cents each. The feed cost to produce live weight was 6 cents a pound."

The fur end of this industry is growing better in this country. This year the National Breeders and Fanciers Association will work hard on the fur proposition, with the view of getting one of the large fur companies to make a specialty of rabbit furs, the members of this association, which, by the way, is over 4,000, to send all their furs to this one house.

In France raising rabbits for their furs is a very important industry (or was before the war), these furs being sold under various names, such as Ermine, Chinchilla, Sable and Otter.

Whether you intend to raise rabbits for home consumption or market breeding, start with good healthy stock. Be very careful in buying, for a bad start is no doubt discouraging.

In concluding this article I wish to say to those contemplating life on a little land, to go in with the object of making a specialty of some one thing. There are so many things of which one can make a specialty, such as ducks, geese, turkeys, chickens, goats, rabbits, pigeons, pet stock, bees, certain kinds of vegetables or flower berries, etc., then in connection with your specialty raise everything that you consume yourself.

A tradesman was talking to me the other day about taking up life on a little land, but stated that he was somewhat dubious on account of seeing some of his fellow workmen return to their trades after trying the little land for some time. "Why is it?" he asked. "Is it because they can't sell what they produce?" "No," I replied, "but from what I can see it is because they do not make a specialty of any one thing for income, but dabble in a little of everything."

HEREDITY

By C. I. Hunt

The 480 descendants of a certain drunken man and a feeble-minded woman included only 46 normal persons. Of the rest 311 were distinctly immoral, criminal, feeble-minded, epileptic or alcoholic, and the others defective in some way. The 496 descendants of the same man, reformed, and a normal woman included absolutely no criminals, only two insane persons and only two drunkards. Nearly all the descendants of this couple were sound in mind and body, many of them prominent citizens. It is unnecessary to point out the lesson in these facts.

The above is taken from one of our agricultural papers. It shows as plainly as words and figures can to breeders of live stock the necessity of getting the right stock for the foundation. What is true in the human family is also true in the animal kingdom. A few dollars extra put into the foundation stock will return many fold in future generations.

USEFUL RABBIT NOTES

Do not feed peach tree branches.

Never disturb your Doe when kindling. Keep away.

Does should not be handled or shipped after they are two weeks pregnant.

Several Does may be kept together in one compartment until they are bred.

If your Buck is a good one, do not allow him to serve more than three Does a week.

In humans, "cleanliness is next to Godliness." In rabbits, it is next to success.

Those who start the business first in a locality, are the ones that will make the most money.

Does suckle their young very early in the morning and late at night; very seldom at any other time.

Always handle your stock gently and you will have pets. They appreciate gentleness and kindness.

It is not advisable to use Bucks for breeding until they are eight months old, although many use them much younger.

Always, in summer, provide a nice shady place for your youngsters. This will prevent lop ears and give good health. Dry feed should be given once a day even if green food is procurable.

Never breed a Doe immediately after kindling, but wait until young are weaned.

It is most profitable to sell young stock when they become of breeding age, instead of disposing of them earlier, as you can get better prices.

If a Doe commences pulling her hair and building her nest two weeks after being bred, it is a sure indication that she is not with young and that she desires to mate. Breed her and thus save two weeks time in obtaining a litter.

In breeding always take the Doe to the Buck's hutch, as there will be less liability of their fighting if not in season. Leave them together only a few minutes; then if necessary try them again some other day. or until they are bred.

Give nursing Does bread, milk and rolled oats if possible. This makes excellent feed for her for nourishing her young.

Kid gloves from rabbit skins are in demand, as they are said to be softer, more pliable and wear better than those made from other skins.

Rabbits are very dainty about their eating; they will eat nothing but the cleanest of food. They should be fed especially for firmness and sweetness of flesh.

In 1912 over 80,000,000 rabbits were sold in the municipal markets of France, the model country; the model country of the world in point of thrift.

Many of the best physicians recommend rabbit meat for aged and run-down people, on account of its great nutritive value and the fact that it is so easily digested.

Robert F. Buetel, of Dennison, Iowa, says that one of his New Zealand does is raising eleven young, and another one ten. He says he is assisting nature by feeding the babies bread and milk and rolled oats.

Rabbits do not require as much space as chickens, so another point is added in their favor, and the cost of raising has been proven much lower, a number of times, say rabbit owners.

It is predicted by the best fanciers that this occupation which is now in its infancy will be the largest of any known industry, in point of numbers engaged in it, and that within a very few years.

In the United States we have family after family, millions of them, in fact, complaining of hard times and yet buying high-priced meat, and nine chances out of ten, their back yard is grown high with nutritious weeds which could be turned into delicious rabbit fries with a little initial cost and trouble.

A FAT PURSE AND A CONTENTED MIND

Deep down in the spring of your being, there is a quality which is called SYMPATHY.

Because of it you marry, and you have children, and you go out, day by day, to fight the forces that aim to starve you and those who depend upon the strength of your right hand.

And because of it you place your hand upon a dog's head, and in a whisper, half to yourself, say: "GOOD FELLOW—MY DOG!"

And the dog will say "yes," with the tail of him, and his unsteady, cold nose will seek the palm of your hand—SYMPATHY, old man—SYMPATHY.

And—primarily, this is the reason why Commercial Rabbit farmers raise beautiful Belgian Hares and great Flemish Giants and New Zealand Red rabbits—this is why they place eggs in an incubator or under the breast of a fat fowl and wait all eagerly for the mystery of BIRTH to COME TO PASS.

We do not understand it, and that's why we love it—pet stock—bringing into the world which did not exist. We play with CREATION, watching the miracle with our own eyes, and touching the MIRACLE with our own hands. We marvel inwardly, but we do not understand—not yet—the reason.

As the great wild places of Nature fall down before the gleaming Ax of Civilization and the haunts of the animals disappear, we shall be taxed to produce the MEAT for our Carnivorous bodies that long centuries of instinct and appetite has made necessary to healthy existence.

Wherefore, AN UNSEEN POWER that lies behind the spheres that swing through space—above and beyond the Milky Way, and below the hindmost star that is in the Firmament—an UNSEEN POWER that we cannot feel and that we cannot KNOW—that Unseen Power—seeing to our hungry future, puts the instruments of CREATION into our hands, and we ACT, but lo! we marvel.

Just so long as this UNSEEN POWER remains behind the necessity for breeding and rearing fur-bearing and meat producing animals for the inside and the outside of our bodies, so long shall we be guided by a blind SYMPATHY to make our animals create as we shall dictate, in respect of weight and quality of coat and color.



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